

What a Thing to Say to the Queen!

Charming Anecdotes from the
House of Windsor



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No Airs
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At Highclere, better known as Downton Abbey, a farm worker was wedged under a broken-down trailer when he heard a familiar voice asking, 'Can I help?' It was the Queen, in a headscarf, out walking with a dog. She is one of those guests who wants to make a contribution.

The Queen had an adventure getting to a private party in London recently. 'We were coming across the Park,' she told friends, 'when a policeman stepped in front of the car and made us wait while a big procession of vehicles passed by with blue flashing lights. It must have been a very important ruler.'

On the morning of 7 July 1983, the Queen awoke to find a stranger in her bedroom, wielding a shard of broken glass. The situation required patience as well as courage. 'Luckily I'm used to talking to people on street corners,' she said afterwards.

In October 1957, when the Queen, still in tiara and evening dress, left New York late at night after a ball, bystanders in their nightclothes lined the route to the airport, some of the women in curlers. 'I wouldn't stand out of doors in my dressing gown to see someone come by in a car, whoever they were,' the Queen remarked.

In the royal tea tent at Buckingham Palace garden parties, the Queen would take off her shoes, rest her hand on her hip and banter with her butler before resuming her rounds.

It was a big adventure meeting the Beatles at the Royal Variety Show in 1963. The Queen asked where their next show was. 'Slough, Ma'am,' Paul McCartney replied. She was delighted. 'Oh, that's near us!'

The estate of Princess Alice, mother of the Duke of Edinburgh, who died in December 1969, amounted to just three dressing gowns.

The Queen told Annie Leibovitz about the visit of a very different kind of photographer. 'Jane Bown came all by herself and I helped her move the furniture,' the Queen explained.

Camilla couldn't see what all the fuss was about over her forthcoming wedding to Prince Charles. 'It's just two old people getting hitched,' she remarked.

